

Message Text

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ACTION AF-07

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4831

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

S E C R E T LONDON 13495

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, UK, ET

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA: BRITISH ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT ETHIO-
PIAN SITUATION: ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SO-
LICITS BRITISH VIEWS

1. IN GENERAL DISCUSSION OF ETHIOPIAN SITUATION WITH
HEAD EAST AFRICA DEPARTMENT AT FCO, EWANS, ON OCTOBER 16,
EMBOFF GAVE US ASSESSMENT BASED ON INFO PROVIDED BY DE-
PARTMENT AND RECENT CABLES FROM ADDIS. EWANS COMMENTED
THAT BRITISH SHARE BASIC US ASSESSMENT, BUT BELIEVE THAT
MAIN PROBLEM GIVING CONCERN AT PRESENT TIME IS WHETHER
MILITARY AUTHORITIES WILL BE ABLE TO WORK WITH CIVILIAN
ADMINISTRATORS AND POLITICIANS, BEST OF WHOM ARE NOW EI-
THER IN JAIL OR OUT OF THE COUNTRY. BRITISH ARE ALSO
CONCERNED THAT ECONOMIC SITUATION COULD DETERIORATE TO
POINT WHERE MILITARY WOULD TAKE DESPERATE MEASURES TO
TRY TO REMEDY IT. BRITISH FEEL MILITARY ARE INCOMPETENT
TO ADMINISTER COUNTRY AND HAVE NOT PROVIDED LOCAL AND
NATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS WITH SUFFICIENT GUIDANCE TO KEEP
ADMINISTRATION RUNNING AND COUNTRY TOGETHER.

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2. EWANS ALSO SAID THAT FOREIGN MINISTER ZAUDE HAD ASKED BRITISH PERMREP AT UN FOR ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION IN HIS COUNTRY. BRITISH GAVE HIM FACTUAL PRESENTATION OF RESULTS LAST WEEKS DEVELOPMENTS WHICH WERE SAME AS THOSE REPORTED BY EMBASSY ADDIS. ZAUDE TOLD BRITISH THAT MILITARY, INCLUDING GENERAL ANDOM, NOT LISTENING TO CIVILIANS AND NOT CAPABLE OF RUNNING COUNTRY THEMSELVES. ZAUDE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT COOPERATION BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND CIVILIANS IS POSSIBLE AND THAT THE COUNTRY COULD BE HEADING FOR DISASTER. BEST PROSPECT, ACCORDING TO ZAUDE, WOULD BE IF MILITARY COULD TURN UP REGIME SIMILAR TO THAT IN NIGERIA OR SUDAN. AS RESULT OF TALKS IN NEW YORK, EWANS SAID, BRITISH BELIEVE IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ZAUDE MAY NOT RETURN TO ADDIS.

3. ON EXTERNAL RELATIONS SIDE EWANS SAID ETHIOPIANS HAD APPROACHED SOVIETS FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND HAD RECEIVED RESPONSE. ALL HE WOULD SAY ABOUT THE TYPE OF RESPONSE WAS THAT IT WAS NOT "WARM" AND THAT HE DID NOT KNOW HOW FAR THE SOVIETS WOULD OR COULD GO TO ASSIST.

4. EWANS ALSO COMMENTED THAT BRITISH HAD HEARD THAT ETHIOPIAN DIPLOMATIC SERVICE WOULD SOON BE PURGED OF INCOMPETENTS. THE ONLY NAMES HE MENTIONED WERE ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR ACCRA AND POSSIBLY AMBASSADOR IYSSU MENGESHA IN LONDON.

5. BRITISH STILL INTERESTED IN WELFARE OF EMPEROR, AND ACCORDING TO EWANS, HAVE TOLD "MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY" AND GENERAL ANDOM THAT EMPEROR WOULD BE WELCOME IN UK SHOULD HE CARE TO COME HERE.

6. COMMENT: BRITISH OBVIOUSLY HAVE GREAT DEAL OF CONFIDENCE IN FONMIN ZAUDE AND BELIEVE THAT WITH HIS BACKGROUND AND ABILITY, ZAUDE COULD PLAY CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN THIS KEY TRANSITIONAL PERIOD. BRITISH APPEAR TO RELY HEAVILY ON ZAUDE'S JUDGMENT IN MAKING THEIR OWN ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT SITUATION. END COMMENT.

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